

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXIII.

ASHLAND, O., THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 1901.

No. 2.

Editorial

Lessons of the Omaha Crime

The whole civilized world was startled and terrified by the crime committed in Omaha, Nebraska, a few weeks ago. The only son of a very wealthy citizen was stolen by brigands, and his parents notified that unless a ransom of \$25,000 in gold was paid at once, the boy's eyes would be put out with acid, and he would be sent home in that awful condition. To pay the ransom was to make the crime a success, and expose every wealthy family in the land to a like peril. Not to pay was to expose the boy to a horrible fate. Parental love triumphed over public policy, and the ransom was paid. It was an unusual and startling crime. Older people remember the Charley Ross abduction. A bright little curly head boy was stolen from his parents, who never saw him again. He was undoubtedly murdered by his abductors, who failed to get the ransom demanded.

Sanguine people who try to believe nice things about human nature are sadly shocked at the horrible disclosure of these bottomless abysses of depravity and degeneracy. It is impossible to think of any crime, of any cruelty, of any abomination, of any black and awful horror and wickedness but that there are men who will deliberately commit any or all of them for money. Do you wish a stronger statement than that? Neither language nor imagination can measure the fearful depths of damnation into which some men have fallen, and into which therefore it is possible for men to fall. We call such men degenerates, but degeneracy begins with unregeneracy, and the multitudes to whom the last condition applies are exposed, they and their children after them, to the deeper depths, nether hell which in Milton's profoundest hell, "opened wide its mouth, threat'ning to devour." We need to know the actual moral status, the disease, the depravity, the ruin of this human nature of ours in order to get a just conception of the meaning of salvation, its potential forces, its tremendous task, its scope, and nature and power. When we know what Christ came for, what he suffered and died for, we are then, and not until then, in a position to do his work as he would have it done—to hold forth that it is the divine power alone that can work the otherwise impossible miracle of human salvation.

There are other lessons in this incident, for instance the insecurity of riches. No poor man shivers with terror for fear that his darling babe will be stolen by unspeakable wretches. The rich all over this land feel that terror now. Horror invades all their luxurious palaces. Phantoms of fear glide along stately halls tonight, and hide behind costly tapestries. Every little innocent in the dwellings of wealth

is exposed to a peril more to be dreaded than death. There are some things, many things, which make the heritage of riches to be worse than that of poverty and toil, and far better indeed is a little with security and happiness, than unlimited gold with unlimited misery.

The Omaha crime furnishes a concrete illustration of a particular peril to the young which has startled the whole world. And yet today there are hundreds and thousands of boys and girls suffering the abduction of all that is pure and good, stolen from virtue and happiness, stolen from usefulness, stolen from heaven and shut up in the hell of the saloon, or the unspeakable den of impurity, with no one to offer a ransom. Which is the greater crime and horror, to steal a boy's person, or to steal his mind and soul? To rob him of earthly life, or of eternal life? The latter and worse crime is constantly committed in the open light of day, and before our eyes, by the saloon, by the harpies of evil literature, by procuresses of every sort of vice, who throng the by-ways and high-ways of the world as if hell itself had been vomited among the nations. Who is there left to be alarmed and startled at this, and to address themselves to find the ransom; to arm themselves also with the panoply of righteousness, civic and spiritual, and thus to withstand this flood of satan in our midst. Here is work for the new century, work for Christ's soldier. Oh, man of God, stand thou valiently in the forefront of this battle, and for the love of your little ones, for love of native land and love of God, play thou the man, brave and steadfast and mighty, until the end that brings victory.

Courtesy

It costs nothing, and always pays the biggest kind of dividends, the biggest and best. Like sunshine and happiness, it is contagious. Did you ever notice how many more smiling faces you meet on a bright, sunshiny morning than on a dark, cloudy morning? Take notice next time, and you will be surprised at the result. When old Sol smiles, he makes people smile. So it is with the gentle art which we name courtesy. Unlock that imprisoned kindness down in your heart somewhere, and let it shine forth in a smiling face, and sound forth in kindly words and cheering messages, kindly deeds, all those little amenities of intercourse which for want of a better name we call courtesy. Paul, the cultivated gentleman, said, "Be courteous." Usually a gentleman will, and so will a lady. Some males and some females apparently do not know how. If you don't know how, or if you are merely thoughtless, turn about and learn, cultivate thoughtfulness, see how much genuine and unflinching courtesy will brighten your own life, and how it will sow kindness and happiness all about you.